

**Making a Difference
In
New Hampshire**

**An Evaluation of
New Hampshire's
Five Year LSTA Plan**

**Submitted to the
Institute of Museum and Library Services**

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with assistance from

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Executive Summary

LSTA funds have been used in New Hampshire to leverage and share scarce resources for the benefit of all 1,250,000 residents. The New Hampshire State Library has implemented and achieved most of its five year plan with a discipline focused on providing resources and access to technology and information sources to all libraries and residents in the state. The New Hampshire State Library has enabled local libraries and school libraries to participate in 21st century information resources, regardless of the wealth of the community.

The New Hampshire State Library has effectively led a process which provides to residents services that would cost their communities many millions of dollars. The database project alone (NHewLINK) has saved communities over 5 million dollars, to be used for other library services. In many communities and schools, these databases would not be available or affordable without LSTA support.

Very simply, without LSTA support, libraries in New Hampshire would be less relevant to residents today than they are. Comments from residents and librarians indicate a renewed vitality to many New Hampshire libraries. This has resulted from the implementation of the LSTA five year plan and LSTA funds to support the plan. The sense of vitality and relevance is critical to libraries remaining an important social asset in our communities. A sense of place, of community, is important in the southern part of New Hampshire where communities have been changing, growing and maturing for many years, as well as in central and northern, more rural parts of the state that rely on a lower tax base to support their library and schools.

Similarly, the amount of staff development, training, continuing education, tech training and the mobile tech lab, which is provided by the NH State Library with LSTA assistance, is easily worth many hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The New Hampshire State Library also provided many smaller competitive LSTA grants to local libraries and schools which enabled them to participate in the resource sharing projects. Without adequate hardware, networks and telecommunication connections, many libraries were unable to participate in the broader resource sharing.

Some of the projects discussed in the following report include:

- A state wide database offering ProQuest, and other products, links and resources
- Access to cataloging expertise and inclusion in a statewide union catalog
- Participation in inter library loan based on the expanded database of over 1.5 million records
- A van delivery service that accommodates over 280 libraries throughout the state and receives praise from residents and librarians alike for its fast service and friendly staff

- Access to a professionally operated state government website called Webster, which will contain information on almost every facet of state government that a resident needs
- Professional training and development for library staff through workshops, classes, teleconferences, webcasts, tech labs and individual coaching and consulting when needed
- Talking Book Services which circulated close to 100,000 items in 2000 to blind, visually impaired and physically disabled residents

The New Hampshire State Library has achieved most of the goals in the five year plan. In particular the Van Delivery Service, New Hampshire Automated Information Services, New Hampshire Union Public Access Catalog, NHewLINK and Webster are excellent models for implementing resource sharing of collections, network services and electronic access to information sources.

Who Benefits?

Though there are specific communities and populations of residents in New Hampshire who may benefit more from a particular program than others, it is the full population of the state who have improved and increased access to information and materials due to LSTA assisted projects. Specific populations that have benefited from LSTA assisted projects include:

- Urban and rural residents whose libraries now have access to the Internet, full text databases, state government data, and access to the collections of libraries throughout the state.
- Middle school and high school students who now have access in school and at home to a variety of databases
- Many retirees and seniors who rely on their library as a comfortable hub of their community, where they can learn to e-mail relatives, search the Internet and have books delivered to them quickly from other libraries
- Blind, visually impaired and physically disabled people who rely on Talking Books or Large Print books as their lifeline to the world
- Librarians who receive much needed certification, skills training, technology training and guidance, and a sense of community with other New Hampshire librarians

The following report will describe some of these programs and benefits.

Overall report of results in achieving goals and objectives based on the 5 year plan.

“Before the Van Delivery program and NHAIS we were in the Middle Ages in New Hampshire, no – the Stone Age.”

The New Hampshire State Library created a five year plan in 1997 to guide the use of LSTA funds. The plan was discussed and approved by the New Hampshire State Library Advisory council on July 11, 1997. The plan covers the period from October 1, 1997 to September 30, 2002. In referring to a “Heritage of Innovative Resource Sharing,” the New Hampshire State Librarian, The New Hampshire State Library Advisory Council and Library Development Services developed an inclusive process to provide for the involvement of many in the New Hampshire library community. An important component of the planning process was to develop a discussion within the NH library community to create a dynamic and rewarding synergy between the existing NHAIS (New Hampshire Automated Information System) program and the advent of LSTA funded resource sharing projects. To accomplish this, many forums and meetings were held throughout the state, including:

- A series of meetings with the six Area Library Forums and meetings with library cooperatives
- NH State Library Advisory Council full day retreat
- Planning links on the State Library website with a request for comments
- Flyers outlining goals of the five year plan sent to all libraries
- Discussions with attendees at the Spring Conference of the NH Library Association

New Hampshire’s five year plan emphasizes that “...all residents of New Hampshire should and will have maximum opportunities to work, learn, exercise civic responsibility, and enjoy a quality of life through unrestricted access to information,”...therefore, “... the State Library in conjunction with the New Hampshire Advisory Council has identified several areas of concern that must be addressed.” The main areas of need are stated as:

- Increased access to information through improved telecommunications and technology.
- More effective training and education of librarians, library staff, public officials and the public in the critical importance of the library in an information environment.
- Increased demand for networked information services by the public.
- An increasingly diverse state population that makes it necessary to determine which non-traditional or new library services will be required.

- The compelling need to place libraries in their rightful place in a learning society and to present increased justification for strong local and state support.

The critical goals resulting from the planning process and guiding the five year plan are:

Goal #1: Information access through technology

Every resident of New Hampshire will have access to a wide array of library and information resources either electronically or in traditional fashion and, when necessary, will be afforded the assistance required for the optimum utilization of technology.

Goal #2: Information empowerment through special services

New Hampshire residents irrespective of geographic location, socio-economic or cultural background, level of literacy skill, physical or mental condition, or age and ability will have electronic or on-site equal access to library and information services.

Goal #3: Efficient and effective administration of LSTA

Efficient and effective administration of the Library Services and Technology Act program to accomplish the objectives of the five year plan.

More than 95% of LSTA funds have been allocated to reach the first two goals and accomplish the objectives of the five year plan. Primary uses of LSTA funds to achieve these goals have been for statewide services involved in resource sharing. A small portion of the funds have been allocated as competitive grants awarded to libraries under projects that meet specific requirements. These competitive grants are defined by the following criteria:

Category I: Projects that establish or enhance electronic linkages between or among libraries, link libraries electronically with educational, social, or information services; and assist libraries in accessing information through electronic networks. Priority is given to consortia and cooperative projects.

Category II: Projects used for training librarians in the efficient use of new technologies to improve public access to information; to encourage libraries to establish consortia; and assist libraries to acquire and share computer systems and telecommunications equipment.

Category III: Library and information service projects designed to reach persons who have difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities (including children and families below the poverty line.) Emphasis on adult literacy and young adult's reading programs.

Category IV: Projects that conserve and preserve significant library materials held by the state's various libraries. Projects which emphasis access to these collections are a priority.

The implementation of the five year plan, by the New Hampshire State Library, has been particularly focused and deliberate in reaching the plan's goals and providing benefit to all of New Hampshire's 1.25 million residents. Comments received from librarians and residents alike attest to significantly improved library services and access to information resources during the past 5 years. Modest resources have been leveraged to achieve many, if not most, of the goals.

As one person commented, *"New Hampshire libraries have come light years in the past five years – largely helped with LSTA funding."*

Goal #1: Information access through technology

Every resident of New Hampshire will have access to a wide array of library and information resources either electronically or in traditional fashion and, when necessary, will be afforded the assistance required for the optimum utilization of technology.

Objective 1.1: Establish or enhance electronic linkages between and among all types of libraries to provide faster and increased access to networked information

Specific projects to achieve this objective and the corresponding results include:

- Maintain the State Library Internet (or successor technology) connections. (1997-2002)
- Establish a frame relay connection or similar connection at the State Library. (1998)
- Increase the number of libraries with broadband connections to NHAIS and or the Internet. (1998-2002)
- Digitize selected, unique library collections and make them accessible through the WWW. (1999-2002)
- Increase public access to specialized resource and research collections through the NHAIS. (1998-2002)

Results:

The New Hampshire State Library has consistently applied LSTA funds to achieve this objective. Through statewide projects and competitive grants to individual libraries, an environment has been created to focus libraries on providing access to digital information. NHAIS membership has been positioned as the gateway to a world of electronic resources and information, as well as access to the ever expanding union catalog of holdings for public, school and academic libraries. Free cataloging for NHAIS members leads to the union catalog, NHUPAC to benefit all New Hampshire residents. Today NHUPAC contains the holdings of the State Library as well as over 300 public, school and special libraries in the state. The presence of all libraries in the union catalog will continue to be an important goal.

Persistent emphasis by the NH State Library staff, about the critical nature of NHAIS and NHUPAC, has rewarded the residents of New Hampshire with libraries that can provide access to materials from all over the state and to electronic resources that their local public library or school could not possibly afford on their own. Since 1998, over \$200,000 has been distributed to local libraries and schools, through direct competitive grants, to help them improve their use of technology. Uses include purchases of PCs, network equipment, telecommunications equipment and connections and training in the use of electronic resources and equipment.

Establishing NHAIS and NHUPAC as the gateway to additional resources and programs has allowed the State Library to combine and leverage LSTA funds with local and state funds to create minimum standards of service for all libraries. Libraries agree to support the growth and accuracy of NHAIS and NHUPAC so that collections can be shared and the cost of other electronic resources can be leveraged for all to use.

Unique collections will be entered into the database and available to a larger audience as original cataloging becomes possible in future planning.

All communities and residents in New Hampshire will continue to benefit as the next generation of the PAC, ILL and van delivery processes are developed.

Objective 1.2: Provide assistance to libraries to facilitate ease of access to information through electronic networks

Specific projects to achieve this objective and the corresponding results include:

- Establish training programs for librarians and library staff to give them the knowledge necessary to provide library patrons with high level assistance in the areas of electronic information. (1997-2002)
- Coordinate and offer workshops within the state and region on the uses of the latest information technologies. (1998-2002)
- Offer grants and other support to librarians in all types of libraries to enable them to acquire additional training so they may provide technical assistance and training to other librarians. (Train the Trainer) (1998-2002)

Results:

Training programs for librarians have increased in the number offered and the number of participants each year since 1998. Nearly 2000 participants, state wide, have benefited from the expanded professionally run workshops and courses that are offered through state wide Library Development Services. Included in the spectrum of courses and workshops offered is the Soaring to Excellence teleconference series which is available in ten locations throughout the state as well as webcasts (such as a recent panel on how September 11th has changed

libraries) which can be viewed in prearranged conference sites or at a librarian's own PC.

The regular Course Catalog includes many sessions on:

- Internet Searching
- Cataloging and ILL
- Database Searching
- Reference and Information

Considering that New Hampshire spans an urban to very rural geography and the turnover and retirement rate among librarians is high in some areas, Library Development Services has achieved a high level of results in reaching librarians throughout the state with basic, high quality training and development. The attention to training and certifying new library directors is important for the quality of library service in the state. Greater coordination is needed to train and develop new directors and to increase the availability of certification programs.

Boundaries between libraries are continuing to blur in New Hampshire as the responsibility to train, develop and nurture the state's librarians is a mission that Library Development Services believes in. Without LSTA assistance, the breadth of the programs would not be possible.

Objective 1.3: Encourage libraries in different areas of the state to establish multi-type library consortia and increase the quality and magnitude of resource sharing

Specific projects to achieve this objective and the corresponding results include:

- Continue to assist all types of libraries in entering their bibliographic data into the automated statewide union database. (NHU-PAC) (1997-2002)
- Decrease the turn around time in the resource sharing process by maintaining and expanding (using state funds when possible) the statewide van delivery system. (1998-2002)
- Expand the capacity of libraries to transmit requested information electronically. (1998-2002)

Results:

All New Hampshire State Library departments consistently focus on this goal and its related projects, which are considered the backbone for all other library services that can be provided. Through the growing membership and use of the New Hampshire Automated Information System (NHAIS), the New Hampshire Union Public Access Catalog (NHUPAC), Interlibrary Loan and the Van Delivery System, many libraries and the communities they serve have been transformed into modern information centers. Comments from librarians and library users reflect deep satisfaction with the benefits and values from these programs and will be reviewed further in the next section of the report. Additionally, NHUPAC has been so successful and capable of additional expansion, that Governor Shaheen

has signed HB 25, which will provide \$425,000 for the next generation of the catalog. State appropriations will be able to fully fund the new system. LSTA funding played an invaluable role in supporting NHUPAC to this point of awareness and acceptance throughout the state.

Objective 1.4: Provide guidance and leadership through the State Library's Library Development Section to ensure the development of electronic access and networked services in all regions of New Hampshire

Specific projects to achieve this objective and the corresponding results include:

- Provide advisory and consultative services to make it possible for libraries to plan and develop library services tailored to meet local needs. (1997-2002)
- In concert with the State Department of Education, college for Lifelong Learning, the NH Technical and Community Colleges, and the state's library associations, develop recommendations and an implementation schedule to provide library staff members with the skills necessary to provide service in an electronic environment. (1998)
- Within federal guidelines, work with the library community, library supporters and state and local officials to ensure that libraries acquire the funding needed for them to serve their users in the world of electronic and networked information. (1999-2002)
- Work with librarians, archivists and manuscript curators in preserving endangered resources and in providing alternative electronic access. (1998-2002)

Results:

Library Development Services has received high marks from librarians throughout the state for their role in consulting with local libraries. The LDS staff provides needed consultation with local libraries for long range planning, collection development, building planning, board development, and skills training for librarians.

Operation 21st Century Libraries was a project to include various library organizations in the state with the training and development of librarians concerning technical electronic information.

Objective 1.5: Make research and special collections in the state's research libraries available to the public by strengthening the resource sharing capabilities of these libraries

Specific projects to achieve this objective and the corresponding results include:

- Provide grant funds to academic and other libraries to assist them in making special materials available to residents through interlibrary loan

and in providing reference service either on-site or via the Internet. (1998-2002)

- Improve public access to government information via NHAIS and by providing special and unique materials in full text on the state wide system. (1998-2002)
- Purchase database licenses for statewide access to reference sources available via the Internet to enhance library reference services. (1997-2002)
- Acquire additional materials in various formats to strengthen the State Library's collections and thereby significantly improve its role as a major research and resource sharing center in the state. (1998-2002)
- Expand and enhance Webster, the NH government WWW home page. (1998-2002)
- Provide appropriate incentives to guarantee that every library will have at least one public access terminal with a direct connection to Webster by 2002. (1997-2002)

Results:

The support, promotion and development of NHewLINK and Webster, with the aid of LSTA funds, and in conjunction with state funding, is a very public expression of delivering value added services to the residents of New Hampshire. NHewLINK was a pilot project begun in 1998, seeded with LSTA funds. The original data base licensing project served only public library staff. NHewLINK provides online access to ProQuest, Library Literature and other databases to all libraries, schools and residents of New Hampshire, which includes almost 400 libraries. FirstSearch has recently been added to NHewLINK for in-library use in public high schools and public libraries. The cost for the 400 school and public libraries to individually subscribe to these databases would exceed 5.6 million dollars.

Some of the comments about the NHewLINK project include:

"Databases are essential and NHSL's contract with ProQuest, etc... is a blessing for small public libraries with limited budgets. Education and training in using the above, as well as in standard computer usage is also vital. Most of NH's public libraries operate with limited budgets; it has been difficult to add funds for technology when materials budgets are inadequate. LSTA funds are a critical source of support."

"Keep offering statewide resources that we need."

"People are using NHewLINK all the time."

Webster, New Hampshire state government online, is maintained and developed by the New Hampshire State Library since 1995. Two web directories, which include NH Businesses and Organizations and NH Libraries were initiated with LSTA funding. The New Hampshire State Library hosts many of the agency web sites on its servers and provides a webmaster and technical support component to

all state agencies relating to the Internet and electronic access to government information. Due to Webster, The NH State Library is widely viewed throughout state government as the leader in electronic access to information. They have successfully become a respected, cooperating partner with all state agencies.

Competitive grants have been awarded in each year of LSTA funding to achieve the goal of every library having at least one public access terminal with a direct connection to Webster. These very popular grants have been used for PCs, networking and/or connection costs by the libraries.

Comments about Webster include:

“The library community is very proud of leadership the state library has brought to state government by overseeing Webster.”

“We have overcome the fears by state government departments that the state library would not come in and take over their IT functions through Webster.”

“Webster needs to become a free portal “known throughout the state by name – Webster – by people who use state government information on a regular basis.”

Other comments include:

“Demand for word processing and Internet access far exceeded what we could provide. LSTA provided the help we needed.”

“It is now possible to answer reference questions more easily, since we can scan in information and e-mail it to them.”

Goal #2: Information empowerment through special services

New Hampshire residents irrespective of geographic location, socio-economic or cultural background, level of literacy skill, physical or mental condition, or age and ability will have electronic or on-site equal access to library and information services.

Objective 2.1: Develop and implement plans to expand and improve library services currently available to New Hampshire’s diverse populations

Specific projects to achieve this objective and the corresponding results include:

- Strengthen through grants and State Library services the services of public libraries serving those persons in rural areas who have difficulty in using a library. (1998-2002)
- Work with various literacy agencies serving adults in the state to promote literacy and reading. (1998-2002)

- Work to improve the state's institutional libraries (including county jails) by making such libraries eligible to apply for technology grants. (1998-2002)
- Provide encouragement and support to libraries in the development of summer reading programs and after school programs directed toward the improvement of reading. (1998-2002)
- Improve and expand the state's Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped services to persons with disabilities in New Hampshire. (1998-2002)
- Provide libraries with the necessary assistance in acquiring and using technology designed to make library resources and services available to persons with special needs and promote such services. (1998-2002)
- Make increased educational and training opportunities available to libraries and trustees in order to make them cognizant of library services and to prepare them for the effective delivery of library services in the future. (1998-2002)

Results:

Though literacy projects have not been a central focus of LSTA funded projects in New Hampshire, there have been projects concerning adult literacy and children's summer reading programs. One example was the new Skills for Modern living Project which formed collaborations between the Pillsbury Free Library and various county and local literacy and community organizations to assist adults in improving reading and math skills.

The Weare Public Library provided an after school project called *Bridges: Writing to Reading*. The students from the Weare Middle School met after school and discussed poems, short stories and novels and wrote their own poetry, later produced a booklet called *The Creative Quill*. According to Christine Hogue, the director of the Weare Public Library, "*The focus of the LSTA grant was on 'underserved populations.' Not only were our young people underserved, but undiscovered in terms of talent. Just being around the kind of self discovery and mutual support that Bridges generated was fun.*"

North Country Library Development Services provides a number of services, training, consulting and materials to libraries and residents in the rural north of the state. A computer training lab is also available for librarian development with technology matters.

The Talking Book program in New Hampshire serves over 2000 active participants. LSTA funds are used for rent for facilities to house and service the collection and salaries for some of the staff. Additionally, LSTA funds are used to expand the large print collection and to promote the use of all the materials, as well as development for the personnel administering the program. LSTA assistance for the Talking Book program has ranged from \$75,000 to \$122,000

within the past four years. In 2000, 750 new canvas bags were purchased to replace older worn ones.

The Talking Book program has also developed an extensive descriptive video collection for use by participants. This collection is becoming more popular as users learn about the titles available. LSTA infrastructure funding enables this type of collection development, both from the regular budget and from additional community sources.

A review of circulation figures for the Talking Book program reveals that 20% fewer Recorded Cassettes have been distributed between 1997 and 2001 fiscal year. At the same time, Large Print Books have increased in circulation by 12%. The circulation figures by year are:

Circulation for Talking Book Materials – FY 1997 to 2001					
Format	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Recorded Cassettes	99,200	94,037	89,112	85,692	79,625
Large print Books	7,290	7,629	7,698	8,127	8,238

The national average for recorded cassette use is about 40 titles per year per user. New Hampshire's 2000 active users exactly reflect that statistic.

However, the evaluation survey reflects that many respondents are unaware of the benefits of the Talking Book program and the potential benefits to their communities. Approximately 60% of the respondents attributed the value of the program as "low, very low or as moderately valuable."

The New Hampshire State Library and the new regional librarian have begun to examine these issues. New Hampshire residents and librarians need to become aware of this valuable asset. LSTA funds can be used in the future to reach the goal of "... improving and expanding the state's Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped." Additional outreach, collaboration with community and health organizations and new promotion and public relations methods are needed to reach a wider population.

Granite Bits, the occasional newsletter of the Bureau of Services to Persons with Disabilities at the New Hampshire State Library, is available in many formats. The newsletter communicates information about the Talking Book program clearly and warmly. It covers topics including additions to the collections, new technologies, staff changes and assignments, reader's suggestions and staff picks.

Goal #3: Efficient and effective administration of LSTA

Efficient and effective administration of the Library Services and Technology Act program to accomplish the objectives of the five year plan.

Objective 3.1: Promote public awareness of LSTA programs among all types of libraries in New Hampshire

Specific projects to achieve this objective and the corresponding results include:

- Collect and disseminate information through state Library publications and other appropriate publications in both print and electronic format. (1997-2002)
- Continue to use the State Library's Web page to increase library and public awareness of the activities being carried out under the LSTA plan. (1997-2002)

Results:

The New Hampshire State Library has successfully used a variety of formats to communicate information about LSTA projects and funding. These include for public, academic, school and special libraries, the use of "Granite State Libraries," the widely disseminated and read quarterly newsletter of the library in both print and as of 2002 in electronic format. Library Development Services also publishes the "Once and Future Librarian" newsletter as an occasional, and as-needed resource to assist librarians in the development and improvement of libraries in New Hampshire. "Granite Bits" is the occasional newsletter of the Bureau of Services to Persons with Disabilities. "Granite Bits" is available online, in large print and on audiocassette. The New Hampshire State Library website continues to provide an easy to use format for finding a wide range of information for librarians and residents.

In Depth Evaluations

The New Hampshire Automated Information System (NHAIS) and The New Hampshire Union Public Access Catalog (NHUPAC) provide the means to locate materials and to make interlibrary loan (ILL) requests electronically. NHAIS was originally created by the New Hampshire legislature in 1983. NHAIS provides a statewide union catalog for all libraries to use for inter library loan, cataloging and a statewide OPAC referred to as NHUPAC. NHAIS serves as a help desk function assisting participating libraries with access issues to NHUPAC, cataloging questions and issues, and answering 'how to' questions about ILL.

NHUPAC serves as the foundation for the successes of the ILL process and the Van Delivery Service throughout the state. Approximately 13,000 titles per month are circulated from the catalog. NHAIS and NHUPAC provide libraries, especially smaller ones, the freedom to use budgeted funds elsewhere than in the costly cataloging processes. In this way, NHAIS and NHUPAC leverage every dollar funded through the

state and through LSTA to every library in the state. The NHUPAC database has grown to over 1.5 million titles, including academic and public libraries. Prior to the State Library focus on creating NHAIS and NHUPAC, there were 4 different databases in the state. These were merged in 1990 to create the existing database. The state of New Hampshire could not have funded this merger in 1990, so LSTA funds were critical. Today NHUPAC contains the holdings of the State Library as well as over 300 public, school and special libraries in the state.

While there is growing participation in the NHAIS and NHUPAC services, additional resources are needed to “round up the lost sheep” who may benefit from the ILL system but do not fully participate in the catalog. Additional public relations and publicity is needed to assist local public libraries in committing to both projects. Complete state wide resource sharing through the process of cataloging, ILL and Van Delivery will benefit all New Hampshire residents when all libraries participate.

Over 90% of respondents to the LSTA Evaluation Survey reported that they ‘highly’ or ‘very highly’ value the benefits NHAIS provides to their community; which is the statewide union catalog for all libraries to use for ILL, cataloging and van delivery. Similarly, when asked how they view the improvement of specific services through the use of LSTA funding, 71% rated ILL as ‘highly’ or ‘very highly’ improved and 64% viewed resource sharing as ‘highly’ or ‘very highly’ improved.

Over 75% of the libraries that received a competitive grant stated in the survey that they used the funds to “Improve or establish connectivity to other libraries” or for “Cooperative projects with other libraries to enhance access to resources.” Many of the grant recipients also stated that they used the grants for hardware purchases enabling them to accomplish the connectivity or cooperation. As noted earlier, the ability of many smaller and rural libraries to participate in statewide databases, access to a statewide catalog and subsequent use of inter library loan for delivery of materials is a milestone in the life of many of these libraries. Though they may be small and modestly funded, the New Hampshire State Library, through LSTA funding, has provided a vehicle for local library’s participation in much wider resources.

Comments about NHAIS and NHUPAC include:

“This is the best way to use LSTA funds in our state.”

“Keep offering statewide shared resources that we all need.”

A small minority of respondents discussed what they viewed as rigidity in maintaining a disciplined adoption of NHAIS and NHUPAC. They felt that the overriding emphasis on these programs may at times overshadow needs in other areas. This view was expressed by a couple of directors in larger cities and libraries. They view their needs as being different from the many smaller towns and libraries throughout New Hampshire. One commented that due to the focus and success of these two programs *that “...there is not*

enough money in the pot to address the different needs of medium and larger size libraries.”

An additional comment about limitations include ‘... *no fee to add video and audio titles would be nice...we don’t really know what New Hampshire owns in this area because libraries like ours, that can’t afford to include the record through NHAIS, simply don’t submit them.*”

Comments also included the added benefit and value of NHUPAC being used as an educational and collection development tool. A number of comments stated that the ability to view and understand the collection of other libraries helped them to reevaluate or review their own collections. The breadth of the available collections served to expand their understanding of their resident’s needs as well as a tool to analyze their collections. In terms of collection development, one librarian restated the old maxim by telling the evaluators that “... hundreds of heads are better than one.”

“ When we had access to other library’s holdings we learned a great deal about our own collection, its strengths and weaknesses. We reevaluated our young adult collection and have improved it. We have also added young adult programming and other resources. We are more mindful of the need to keep expanding and refining young adult services now.”

The State Wide Van Delivery System is one of the most successful and visible LSTA funded projects in New Hampshire. Fifty percent of New Hampshire, especially in the northern part of the state, is a rural, mountainous and remote area. The challenge in these areas is to deliver library services and collections over a broad geographical area, with very limited funding. Over 280 libraries receive deliveries of materials processed through the Inter Library Loan system. Some libraries receive daily shipments and some receive shipments 2-3 times per week. Many of the libraries with fewer ILL transactions share a drop off and pick up point with a neighboring library. The high level of satisfaction with this program was cited by most of the participants in the evaluation process. Response from residents with the quick turnaround time for requested materials is very positive and surprised at how effective the service is. The turnaround time and number of participating libraries has increased each year since LSTA funding began in 1998. Over 13,300 items a month are sent through the Van Delivery Service.

Records indicate that the total number of books transported, both dropped off and picked up are:

1998 – 138,438

1999 – 144,526 – 4.5% increase

2000 – 149,120 – 4.1% increase

However, the actual volume of materials that are moved through the system may be much higher, since the above does not include envelopes, boxes and other materials that are delivered.

Though LSTA funds account for a portion of the total cost of the Van Delivery Service, there is widespread recognition throughout the library community that LSTA funds play a supportive and key role in increasing and improving this valuable service. Without the support of LSTA funding, the quality and frequency of this very highly visible program would be impossible. Discussions with librarians throughout the state reveal that the awareness of the role of LSTA funds in the Van Delivery Service is high.

Results from the LSTA Evaluation survey administered as part of the evaluation project confirms our findings about the awareness and value of the Van Delivery Service. Over 95% of the respondents rate the value of the Van Delivery Service to be 'high' or 'very high' and 72% believe that the Van Delivery Service has improved in the past five years due to LSTA funding. A survey conducted in December 2000, by the reference and Information Services of the State Library indicated then that 92% of the 177 respondents reported an over all rating of the van delivery service as 'very good' or 'excellent'. A similar 91% to 95% responded that the time and days of delivery were rated excellent.

Some of the comments about the Van delivery Service, from New Hampshire librarians and staff, include:

"You can't believe how impressed our residents are that we can get materials from all over the state – and fast."

"The Van Delivery Service is a friendly face from the State Library every day."

"ILL and the Van Delivery are our life-line. More frequent deliveries would be great."

Lessons Learned

Results

The use of LSTA funds in New Hampshire has benefited residents in many ways. The overall focus on resource sharing and building linkages among libraries has driven the results of the five year plan.

New Hampshire libraries and New Hampshire residents are much more able to benefit from access to electronic resources and to share collections and resources with all libraries throughout the state. Many residents view their library as the location of first choice for access to information. Though many public and school libraries throughout New Hampshire could not afford to provide access for their community, almost all today have access through the various New Hampshire State Library programs and projects that have been discussed here. Without the assistance and support of LSTA funds, it would not have been possible for many New Hampshire libraries to serve their communities as well as they are today.

At the same time, it seems that LSTA funds have become transparent to many library personnel and users. Though many librarians identified specific projects as LSTA supported projects, the awareness of the role of LSTA funds was mixed. It would benefit the New Hampshire State Library to adopt a simple LSTA branding method to distinguish in print and electronically, those projects which are supported by LSTA funds. Especially important in this regard is the awareness of state and local officials to the role that IMLS/LSTA funds play in their community.

A more ambitious public relations or marketing objective should be developed in the next five year plan to increase awareness of LSTA support. Similarly, local librarians and library boards need additional assistance from the next five year plan in helping them build strong library advocacy in their communities. Much of the funding to sustain initial projects and to initiate new ones will depend on the strength of local library supporters.

Competitive Grants

Each year of the five year plan, funds have been designated for competitive grant proposals. In 2001, the amount available exceeded \$100,000, though less than \$40,000 was approved by the committee reviewing the proposals. Each year, the proposals fell short of the desired focus and quantity required to meet the amount reserved.

In response to questions about the competitive grant process in the LSTA survey, many respondents stated that they did not participate in the past in the grant process for two main reasons. These were:

- Lack of information about the grant process, and
- Inexperience in writing grants

Some of the comments about the grant process include:
From a high school media specialist,

“I have been unaware of these grants in the past, maybe schools were not well informed.”

Others include:

“There is too much paperwork. We need an easier process in place.”

“The time needed to research and write a proposal is prohibitive for us.”

“Too much red tape.”

“The grants are not big enough to bother with.”

“We don’t have a technology plan, so we couldn’t qualify.”

“If I apply for one of the grants, we will have to accept filters because of CIPA. We will not accept grants with those kinds of ‘strings’.”

Approximately 25% of the respondents also stated that the grant categories that have been offered in the past “...did not meet any community needs” in their town or city. Another 25% of the respondents stated that they “Prefer that LSTA funds be used for state wide projects.”

The State Library has learned from this experience and initiated a very hands on, simple methodology to communicate the requirements and application process to the library community. In the fall of 2002, the staff of Library Development Services visited numerous cooperatives, associations and scheduled meetings of librarians throughout the state, to discuss the 2002 competitive grant process. The application materials and the intent of the grants were outlined by the staff and explained in print and on the state library web site. The categories were simplified to include

- **Back To Basics** – grants to fund purchases of a PC, telephones, fax, television, video or audio related equipment. (\$1,000 - \$1,500)
- **Hire An Expert** – grants to contract a professional/expert to work with the library and/or community to improve library services. (\$500 - \$2,500)
- **The Collection Connection** – grants to assist libraries in purchasing print materials that will aid in culturally diversifying a library’s collection. (\$500 - \$1,500)
- **Assistive Technology** – grants for acquiring assistive technology, specifically for a designated package of speech technology and screen magnification software.

Though reserved funds for 2002 were less than in previous years, the proposals that were received more closely met the spirit and expectations that the program intended.

Planning Process

The initial planning process that produced the 1998-2002 five year plan was appropriate for its time period. It addressed critical needs throughout the state that could be overcome with a consistent focus and discipline to implement resource sharing projects and programs. As mentioned, the benefits have been widely welcomed.

The next planning process and five year plan will need to incorporate a dynamic process into its implementation. The objectives should include clearly quantifiable results, a number of continuous measurements to evaluate progress and feedback mechanisms to judge satisfaction with the results. A dynamic planning model that incorporates these elements becomes a sustainable process to drive results. If a decision is made that all libraries in the state need to be NHAIS participants and include their holdings in the database, measuring progress toward this objective should happen often. Feedback in the form of satisfaction surveys, advisory groups, focus groups and discussions with other library organizations also need to be written as part of the plan. An effort to increase enrolled participants in the Talking Book program, in order to increase participation by

5% each year of a five year plan would require a thoughtful campaign that can be measured frequently and adjusted when needed.

Other areas that might be addressed in the next five year plan include additional outreach and involvement with literacy projects, after school projects and programs and additional collaboration between school and public libraries.

Brief review of evaluation process

The New Hampshire State Library has used substantial amounts of LSTA funds to improve library services to residents of New Hampshire. The evaluation process was charged with determining the achievements that were accomplished toward meeting the seven goals of the five year plan.

In the fall of 2001, The New Hampshire State Library, through the Chief Officers of State Libraries in the Northeast (COSLINE) contracted with Library Development Solutions (LDS), a library consulting firm in Princeton Junction, New Jersey to assist in the evaluation of its five year LSTA plan.

Evaluation criteria to view the overall success of LSTA funding toward these goals included:

- Awareness by libraries and citizens about benefits received from LSTA funding.
- Increases in electronic resource usage by libraries.
- The reach or population served, by various LSTA funded projects.
- The perception by the library community of LSTA funded initiatives
- What value added benefits or services have been realized by libraries in New Hampshire.
- Level of multi-type cooperation or resource sharing.

Library Development Solutions used a variety of methods to collect and analyze information concerning New Hampshire's achievements. These included a review of New Hampshire's Five Year LSTA plan, all supporting documentation and annual reports to the IMLS. After identifying those projects that would receive closer analysis, Library Development Solutions scheduled visits to New Hampshire to meet with NHSL staff to discuss each of the plan's components and to develop an understanding of the overall plan. Interviews were held with staff from Network Services, Reference and Information Services, Service to Blind and Physically Handicapped and Library Development Services. Interviews first were held with the Michael York and Janet Eklund, the State Librarian and the Administrator of Library Operations respectively. Mr. York and Ms. Eklund provided a focus and overview in which to view all of LSTA processes. Though neither Mr. York nor Ms. Eklund was an original author of the five year plan, their ability to adapt and adopt the processes already in place marks their leadership and professional styles.

The consultant also met with a group of public library directors in the Nubanusit Library Cooperative to discuss the evaluation and satisfaction with LSTA funded projects. New 2002 competitive LSTA grants were also initiated at this meeting and the group discussed the process and criteria involved.

A survey instrument was developed by Library Development Solutions to collect additional information from New Hampshire librarians. The survey was made available to 406 subscribers to the NHAIS listserv, with an introductory note from the Administrator of Library Operations. Recipients were able to complete the form online or to print it out and return it to LDS by mail, fax or e-mail. Twenty five surveys were returned for a return rate of six percent. The survey is attached to this report.

Measuring Project Outcomes

For the purposes of this evaluation, we have relied on the similar measurements that the New Hampshire State Library projected in its five year plan. These measurements can really be defined as outputs, i.e. statistical representations about program attendance, and classes attended, reference questions asked, ILL transactions, van deliveries and similar measurements. That these interactions with the public, or increases in library use, have the net outcome of enriching the quality of life for New Hampshire residents and positioning New Hampshire libraries as critical community and state assets is a result most of us will agree to. However, proving this, statistically with improvements in people's lives, is beyond the scope of this evaluation. This instead must be inferred. To do so after a project has begun would be an unrealistic intervention, especially given the lack of quantifiable measurements in the five year plan. Much of the evaluation is based on observation and anecdotal information, as the original plan intended in using a "Tell It" format for review.

*"One of the great features of libraries is that they serve people indiscriminately. Librarians are very keen on honoring the privacy of users and asking only for information that helps them accurately negotiate a request for assistance."*¹

Tracking individual user behavior and experiences from their library use to determine an improvement in their lives may at times be contradictory to the mission of most libraries; public, school and academic. Especially difficult is tracking use by traditionally underserved populations. A lack of trust in public institutions combined with a sense of authority can lead to an intimidating relationship between underserved populations and the library.

The consultants spoke with staff and received comments in the survey to offer anecdotal accounts and information concerning the benefits to residents and their experiences. From the middle school student in Weare attending a library after school program to the resident in Walpole delighted that she can get a book quickly from anywhere in the state, to the seniors in the rural north of the state who learned how to e-mail their grandchildren and conduct searches on the Internet, all enjoyed the freedom and newly found access that their library provided. As excited as they are with their new skills and new learning environment they also understand that their use of the library is based on their right to privacy in searching for information, education or entertainment resources.

¹ Peggy Rudd. Documenting the Difference. Demonstrating the Value of Libraries through Outcome Measurement.

Libraries can be required to project expected outcomes from the LSTA funds use. Libraries today expect to track and measure the results of a project and compare to their initially expected outcomes. Libraries today are much more comfortable keeping and tracking use statistics than they were years ago. Aside from budget preparation and considerations, statistics are used by almost all local, state and national library organizations for various purposes. Mostly statistics are used for trend analysis, comparing an individual library to others in its peer group, ranking libraries in terms of income and expenditures, and for legislative purposes to secure additional funding. However, there is rarely an incentive for library directors to accurately track and/or evaluate their statistical results.

There are some library organizations that operate with the aid of a Long Range Plan document that targets specific improvements desired over a period of time and include measurements to determine how well a library has met its goals. Many libraries find that by operating against a plan, the incentive to track and evaluate both statistical and anecdotal results provides a feedback process that benefits the library and the community beyond budget considerations.

In some libraries, constant monitoring and analysis of the desired outcomes create projects that are driven by results instead of by project tasks. The projects themselves, therefore, may dig deeper into meeting community and user needs and become sustainable projects. They give birth to a community process that creates a new synergy between the library and the population being served.

Recent training by the IMLS will assist state library leaders in understanding the initial processes needed to measure outcomes of a project and focus on its value and sustainability for the residents in that state.

Conclusion

LSTA funds in New Hampshire are “...**making a difference.**” Library and information services in New Hampshire have markedly improved through the administration of LSTA funded programs by the New Hampshire State Library. Residents have gained increased access to print, non print and electronic resources in all corners of the state. “Resources are becoming boundary free,” as one New Hampshire resident stated.

The New Hampshire LSTA five year plan has succeeded through initiatives providing access and resources to all 1.25 million residents through their public library, school, university, and at home. Library service in New Hampshire is better positioned as a relevant 21st Century resource for all residents due to vision of state library leaders and the investment of LSTA funds.

LSTA in New Hampshire

Where We've Been . . . Where We're Going

Library Development Solutions, a Princeton, NJ based library consulting firm, has been funded by the New Hampshire State Library to evaluate the impact of LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) funding on the state's libraries during the last 5 years.

This survey is part of a project to gather data about New Hampshire's LSTA program. We would greatly appreciate your cooperation in completing and returning the survey promptly. Your feedback will help the NH State Library in telling the LSTA "story" to federal legislators now considering reauthorization of this important legislation and will also help in developing the next NH LSTA five-year plan.

New Hampshire uses LSTA funding in the following ways:

- **Statewide Library Development Services** – Encouraging and assisting in the development and improvement of local library services through research, planning, training and consultation, as well as staff and trustee development.
- **Resource Sharing and Electronic Linkages**- Establishing or enhancing electronic linkages among or between libraries – including the New Hampshire Automated Information System (NHAIS), ILL, and the Delivery Service. NheuLink and Webster are important projects involved in this area.
- **Information Access**- Targeting library and information services to individuals with disabilities and persons having difficulty using a library, including the Talking Book program through Library Services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped.
- **Competitive Grants** – A competitive grant process makes funds available to local libraries (NAIS members) for projects involving assistive technology, collection development, consulting services or hardware purchases.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.
Library Development Solutions

First, tell us about you and your library:

Library Name:

Library Address:

Library Contact Person Completing Survey, include name and position/title:

Phone:

E-mail:

Now, we need your opinion about LSTA funded projects.

In the last 5 years LSTA has funded a number of statewide projects designed to improve access to print, electronic and non-print library resources, encourage greater resource sharing among all types of libraries, and develop new skills for librarians. Some of the specific projects are listed below. Please indicate next to each project its value to you and the people who use your libraries or your community by circling the number that most closely indicates the value of this service with 5 indicating "high value" and 1 indicating "low value".

Continuing Education, Training, Planning and Consulting

Provides support for Local Library Development consulting services, statewide planning, continuing education and training opportunities for librarians, library assistants, trustees, staff, library administration and management training.

1 2 3 4 5

New Hampshire Automated Information System (NAIS)

Support and promotion for the statewide, multitype, computerized library network. Provides the statewide union catalog for all libraries to use for ILL, cataloging and an OPAC.

1 2 3 4 5

New Hampshire Database Access (NHewLink)

Access to full text databases such as ProQuest, Discovery Complete for public libraries, Platinum Full Text for public high schools, as well as access to reference sources and Webster.

1 2 3 4 5

Talking Books and Large Print Books (LBPH services)

Supports the Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

1 2 3 4 5

Statewide Delivery Service

Supports delivery of materials through the Inter Library Loan process

1 2 3 4 5

Webster

Hosts, develops and maintains the Internet website and official 'locator' service of New Hampshire state government.

1 2 3 4 5

Please share your opinion about how library service in New Hampshire has improved in the last five years from LSTA funds invested in statewide projects.

Benefit	Least					Most				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Increased resource sharing										
Improved Inter Library Loan										
Improved delivery service										
Improved family literacy										
Improved public awareness of libraries										
More continuing education materials and										

opportunities					
Increased electronic resources					
Improved cooperation between schools and public libraries					
Increased sharing of expertise among library staff					
Increased and improved CE workshops					

Now, Think about competitive LSTA grants,

The New Hampshire State Library distributes more than \$800,000 each year in total LSTA funds. Also included are individual libraries, cooperatives, associations, and sub grantees to support grants that promote networked information access, cooperative efforts and resource sharing, and improving library services to specific groups of people that are not currently served or are underserved.

**What, if anything, discourages you from applying for an LSTA funded grant?
(Check all the apply)**

Lack of information
 Inexperience in writing grants
 Size and location of your library
 Doesn't meet a specific community need
 Prefer that LSTA funds be used for statewide projects
 Other:

Please answer the following question if you received a grant for **cooperative efforts or resource sharing**. What did you use project funds to support (check all that apply)

Improving or establishing connectivity to other libraries
 Cooperative projects with other libraries to enhance access to resources
 Collection preservation
 Collection development
 Establishing or strengthening a library consortia
 Public library system development through planning or marketing
 Cooperative training programs
 Conversion of special collections
 Hardware purchases
 Consulting services

Please answer the following question if you received a grant for **extending library services to groups that are not served or underserved**. What did you use project funds to support (check all that apply)

Acquired and used technology to enable library users with special needs to access library resources
 Programs to improve services to children and youth, older adults, people with disabilities, institutionalized populations, limited literacy or English language skills
 Collection development to acquire technology related materials

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS:

How did your community/library benefit from this project?

How has LSTA funding helped you in meeting local needs for service? Would you have been able to institute this program without LSTA funding?

Did you produce a report, brochure, web page or any other promotional material that described your project? *Please provide a URL or copy of other printed materials when you return this survey.*

How will you sustain this project in the future (funding, staffing, etc.)

WHERE WE'RE GOING

What ideas can you offer about New Hampshire's use of LSTA funding during the next five-year period? Please keep in mind that LSTA funds can only be used for projects meeting federal eligibility requirements.

Thank you for participating in the survey!

Please return your completed survey by February 11, 2002

Return to:

Library Development Solutions

64 Princeton Hightstown Road, Suite 106

Princeton Junction, NJ 08550

Or fax to 609-275-4784

Or return by e-mail to us at lburger@librarydevelopment.com